

Section	GA	General Administration	Effective Date:	October 2011
Sub-Section	07	Accessibility Policy	Last Revised Date:	January 2024
Approval: Executive Director			Reviewed:	January 2024
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ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

PURPOSE

Community Living North Grenville (CLNG) is committed to being responsive to the needs of all customers. We strive to provide quality goods and services that are accessible to all. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines on providing goods and services to people with disabilities that will facilitate accessibility. This policy establishes accessibility standards for customer service in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

CLNG will make reasonable efforts to ensure policies, practices and procedures and the delivery of goods and services provided to persons with disabilities and all our customers are in keeping with the principles of dignity, equity/equality of outcome, independence and integration and we will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability and communication needs.

CLNG understands that obligations under the AODA and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

DEFINITIONS

Assistive Devices

Devices used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the customer service standard. Assistive devices include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, personal oxygen tank, listening and communications devices, adaptive technology devices, devices for grasping.

Barrier

As defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, barrier means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

Disability, as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, is:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of

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paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Service Animals

For the purpose of this policy, a 'service animal' is defined as either:

- (i) A "guide dog", as defined in Section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights' Act*; or
- (ii) A "service animal" for a person with a disability. For the purpose of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability,
 - (a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reasons relating to their disability; or
 - (b) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Regulated Health Professional

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

Support Person

For the purpose of this policy, a support person is defined as another person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help them with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

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POLICY

Assistive devices

People with disabilities may choose to use their own personal assistive devices, while accessing our goods, services and facilities. CLNG acknowledges the importance of these devices and will allow people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered, unless there is a defined risk associated with that use.

Should a person with a disability be unable to access CLNG’s services through the use of their own personal assistive device, CLNG will assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual.

CLNG staff, third party contractors and others who provide service to customers will be familiar with the assistive devices and other accessibility supports that will increase the accessibility of our services to people with disabilities.

Service Animals

CLNG acknowledges the vital relationship and dependency which exists between a person with disabilities and their service animal. CLNG is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of the premises that are open to the public and other third parties.

The customer when accompanied by a service animal will be allowed to enter the premises with the animal and keep the animal with him or her at all times, unless the animal is excluded by law from the premises. The customer is responsible for the care, supervision and control of their service animal while on the premises.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks. When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

Support Persons

CLNG is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. People with disabilities have the right to have access to their support person while accessing goods, services and facilities.

If confidential information is going to be discussed, the person with the disability should be asked if they prefer their support person to remain present. If the support person is present

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when confidential information is to be disclosed, signed consent must be received from the person with the disability. A signed confidentiality agreement should also be obtained from the support person.

CLNG may request that a person with a disability be accompanied by a support person, in the event that it is considered necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. This will only occur after consultation with the person with a disability and when it is the only means to allow the person with a disability to access CLNG’s goods or services.

The following criteria shall be used in consulting with the customer:

- i) When the risk is greater than the risk associated with other customers;
- ii) When there is a clear and significant risk to the health and safety of the person with a disability or others;
- iii) When the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by other means;
- iv) When the assessment of the risk is based on consideration of the nature and severity of the potential harm, the duration of the risk, the likelihood that the potential harm will occur and how imminent the potential risk is;
- v) When the assessment of risk is based on the person’s actual characteristics, not on perceived risk that is based on generalizations, misconceptions or fears about a disability.

Training

All individuals who interact and deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of CLNG, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise, shall receive training on accessible customer service, Ontario’s accessibility standards and aspects of the Human Rights Code as it relates to persons with disabilities.

In addition, CLNG shall ensure that employees and volunteers who are involved in CLNG’s policy and program development and/or in directing, monitoring or evaluating policies receive training related to their specific roles.

All third party contractors who deal with the public or other third parties on behalf of CLNG shall ensure that their employees, agents, subcontractors, etc. receive training in accordance with this policy and the *Accessibility Standards* and upon request, shall provide the training records to CLNG.

CLNG employee/volunteer and third party contractor training will include a review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c11* and the

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Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, the requirements under this policy, and instruction about the following matters:

- i) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disability;
- ii) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person;
- iii) How to use equipment or devices available on premises or otherwise made available that may help with the delivery of goods or services to a person with a disability; and
- iv) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing our goods or services;

Accessibility training can take various forms including as part of an orientation or as a separate training program. The training can be provided through handouts at an orientation session, in a classroom setting, by video or through other formats.

CLNG will provide training to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties. Training will also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to applicable legislation, and/or organizational policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.

As required, by *Accessibility Standards*, CLNG’s HR department will log and maintain records which will record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, location, and date the training was completed.

Notice of Service Disruptions

If there is a planned or unexpected disruption in the availability of services and facilities used by customers with disabilities (e.g., ramps under construction), CLNG will notify the public, by posting, of the reason for the disruption, the date(s) of disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

Feedback

CLNG is committed to providing high quality customer service and wants to continue to enhance and improve the accessibility of our customer service to our visitors, members of the community who use our facilities, and other members of the public with disabilities.

A process to receive feedback on the provision of goods and services to has been established. This process enables people to provide feedback either in person, by telephone, in writing, by email, online, on disk or by another method. A Feedback Form is available on our website, or can be picked up in our administration office. The feedback form is available in alternate formats when requested.

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Responses to feedback received are not mandatory. If a person who submits feedback requests a response and provides contact information, CLNG will follow-up with the individual in the format in which the feedback was received. All feedback will be kept in the strictest confidence and will be used to improve customer service.

Employment

CLNG is also committed to accommodating the needs of employees, or potential employees, with disabilities during recruitment and hiring. We notify job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made through the interview and selection process upon request.

We consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

CLNG will notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

We notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. We provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee’s accessibility needs due to a disability.

We will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee’s job; and
- b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee’s consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.

We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee’s disability.

The individualized workplace emergency response information will be reviewed:

- a) when the employee moves to a different location in the organization,
- b) when the employee’s overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- c) when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

CLNG will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports in a timely manner, taking into account the person’s accessibility needs due to disability.

We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the organization determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- a) an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b) a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

We also meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario’s accessibility laws.

OTHER APPLICABLE POLICIES

- GA-06 - Discrimination
- GA-09 - Complaints Feedback
- HR-02 - Hiring Procedures
- HR-11 - Accommodation and Modified-work

Any policies of this organization that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.